

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://legislature-vermont-gov.zoom.us/j/99721098940?pwd=V3J3bkINDNDcUUyMWkxSmgvMG82dz09>

- Introduction
  - I am Mindy Blank from Barre and a community organizer with Seed
  - I am Shane from Milton and a community organizer with Seeding Power Vermont among other things
  - Opening - **Mindy**
    - A goal of ours is to secure \$4.8 million and to get this request in your budget memo
    - Set up
      - You heard from the LAOB yesterday - they shared the history and some of the background of how and why they came together.
  - Body
    - What we want to share with you today can be found in the sunrise report:
      - Request in the report - **Shane**
        - The LAOB submitted their [Sunrise Report](#) last week, and in it they detailed they need at least \$1.2 million annually for baseline operations. That is why we are advocating for an appropriation of \$4.8 million this year so that the Board can function for the next four years and do their work with certainty. **It is critical to ensure that this Board can continue its important work for the next four years and achieve future success.**
      - Powers of the Board - **Mindy**
        - The Sunrise Report sorted through the institutional nuts and bolts of how it will operate, which has been a request of this work for the past several years. That's done.
        - The other critical piece of work asked of this Board was to address the Constitutionality of creating equitable pathways to land and home ownership for protected classes.
          - We've seen reparative work done in many different ways both in VT and beyond, and I believe that the way the LAOB has set up their granting mechanism is brilliant.
          - Rather than creating state grant programs that individuals will apply to, they will create opportunities that community-based organizations can apply for, essentially side-stepping sticky equity questions about "proof of harm" or the like

- It's designed to be inclusive and to focus on populations of people that are left out if they're not directly and specifically considered.
    - Designed for communities by the impacted communities via representation on the Board
    - Constitutionality, 14th amendment, blah
  - Oversight - **Shane**
    - In Act 182, the piece of legislation that created the LAOB it states that the LAOB shall "Work with VHCB; the Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets; the Departments of Financial Regulation and of Housing and Community Development; the Vermont Sustainable Jobs Fund; the Vermont Housing Finance Agency; the Vermont State Housing Authority; the Vermont Economic Development Agency; Vermont Department of Taxes; and other State entities to:
      - Develop metrics, strategies and plans to provide access to resources, overcome structural barriers to housing and land ownership, and redress state policies, practices, laws and rules related to this work.
      - Recommend options and opportunities to provide advantageous tax treatment to properties owned by Vermonters who come from historically marginalized or disadvantaged communities.
      - And recommend programs and related rules to provide loans, grants, and financial assistance to individuals from historically marginalized or disadvantaged communities.
      - This all on top of the grant program Mindy detailed.
- Make-up of the board is so important related to the powers - **Mindy**
  - Each of the orgs represented on the Board have honed their skills in creating solutions for the communities they're serving - this is where their expertise lies. To actually solve for the complex issues surrounding inequitable housing and land access, these groups with track records need to have leadership roles, which they do here, and they need adequate resources to do so.

- Our ask of \$4.8 mil isn't an abundant ask - but it's adequate to do the baseline work. It's enough to take actions on programming as the key equity mechanism of Act 182.
- The idea that the nominating organizations don't just represent marginalized people - these community based orgs have the skills to develop solutions for the communities they work with - so when they show up on the board they're melting together these skills and evaluating what this board will be doing and what state agencies are doing with this very specialized skill set which is navigating systems for people they aren't set up with.
- Community Support - **Shane**
  - The LAOB has incredible community support behind it.
  - We have worked for the past three years to ensure that the legislation establishing the LAOB was, first and foremost, created by the people.
  - Constituents from your legislative districts and the counties you live in have spoken up to support this Board in droves!
  - Nonprofits, businesses, philanthropy, farms, and more from across the spectrum are joining our call for an appropriation of \$4.8 million to be made for the continued work of the Land Access and Opportunity Board.
    - This includes folks like the Vermont Releaf Collective, Vermont Sustainable Jobs Fund, NOFA-VT, the Intervale Center, Clean Yield Asset Management, American Farmland Trust, 350Vt, RAD, Community Resilience Organizations, and more.
- Closing
  - **Mindy**
    - Why this is a really important and good investment
    - By supporting the function of this board it's creating the enabling conditions and this makes it a really solid investment
  - **Shane**
    - Again, we are here advocating for an appropriation of \$4.8 million this year so that the Land Access and Opportunity Board can function for the next four years and do their work with certainty.
    - **This committee did the hard work last year of getting it up and running, and now it's critical to ensure that this Board can continue its important work for the next four years and achieve future success.**
    - **So let's do it and make sure the LAOB is set up for success.**